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THE LAMB OF GOD

Twice in the NT Jesus is called the Lamb of God, and on each occasion by John the Baptist (John 1:29, 35). The word αμνος (αμνος = lamb) is found also in Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19; and in the Greek version of Isaiah 53:7. This last reference suggest Isaiah 53 as the immediate context for John's declaration concerning Christ, the Messiah, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The Lamb of Isaiah 53 was identified with the Messiah as the servant of God. This identity of Jesus as Messiah with the Lamb of God was certain for His disciples with Bible doctrine (John 1:20, 23, 29).

The use of the genitive of possession, the Lamb of God, specifically relates Christ to God in the act of sin bearing. He is at once the sacrificial victim presented to God and the victim provided by God. In this relationship he bears the world's sin, removes it by taking it on Himself. As in Isaiah 53 he bears "on Himself alone the iniquity of us all," by being "led as a lamb to the slaughter, as a sheep before his shearer is dumb."

. The two figures, that of Isaiah 53:7 and that of Exodus 12, consequently coalesce in the designation. They are not contradictory but complementary. "All the utterances of the New Testament regarding the Lamb of God are derived from this prophecy (Isaiah 53:7), in which the dumb type of the Passover now finds a tongue".

All the ideas surrounding the figure of the lamb built up through the progressive revelation of the OT may indeed go into the concept as it occurs in the NT. In Genesis there is the necessity of the lamb, Abel brought the firstlings of his flock (Hebrew 9:22); in Exodus, the efficacy of the lamb, the blood sprinkled door posts (Revelation 7:14; 1 Peter 1:12); in Leviticus, the purity of the lamb, without blemish (1 Peter 1:19); in Isaiah, the personality of the lamb, "He," the lamb, as the servant of the Lord (John 1:29; Rev. 5:12-13). Nowhere, therefore, does the figure merely suggest "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:1); it always carries with it a sacrificial sense (Revelation 5:6, 12; 13:8).

In the book of Revelation the unqualified designation lamb (αρνιον αρνιον) occurs eight times in symbolic reference to Christ and unites the two ideas of redemption and kingship. On one side are such statements as a Lamb which has been slain (5:6, 12); those "who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14); "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (12:11); "they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (21:27).

The stress here falls upon the redeeming work of Christ as the Lamb of God. On the other side, connected with the title is the idea of sovereignty. It is the Lamb that was slain that has power to take the book and loose its seals (5:6-7); there is reference to the wrath of the Lamb (6:16); and the Lamb is seen in the midst of the throne (7:17); the throne in heaven is the throne of God and the Lamb (22:1, 3); the wicked make war against the Lamb but the Lamb is victorious (17:14). In the general term "lamb", then, two ideas unite:

victorious power and vicarious suffering. At the heart of God's sovereignty there is sacrificial love.

THE INCARNATE CHRIST: Incarnation from Latin *in* and *χάρο* meaning stem and *χάρν*, meaning flesh. In the context of Christian theology, the act whereby the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, without ceasing to be what He is, God the Son, took into union with Himself what He before that act did not possess, a human nature, "and so [He] was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person, forever.